

INDUSTRY LEADERS SPEAK

[TALKING POINTS]

COMPILED AND EDITED BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK

Trends and projections from A to Generation Z

Putting together editorial content for a bi-monthly, national magazine can present a challenge: how to balance the topical and timely with the interesting and educational. To that end, we've developed regular columns written by the foremost experts in their respective fields. But we also know that there are many other leaders in our industry who have something to say. We decided to give them that opportunity.

Our 'Call to Industry Leaders' started with a quarter-page notice on page 5 of the September 2010 issue, which we then followed up with targeted e-mail communications. To recap, the Talking Points were:

- [] Projections for new housing starts in 2011
- [] Trends to watch for in design, planning, building and renovation
- [] Energy efficiency and/or green programs: where do we go from here?
- [] Initiatives to encourage Generation Z into the home building industry

Here are the results, in no particular order, of that survey. We hope you enjoy reading these opinions as much as we did. And maybe next November, we'll hear from you, too.

Green Is Gold



AVID Canada
Paul Cardis, Founder and CEO



For the past four years, the study of home design conducted by AVID Ratings has confirmed that consumers are making the shift towards greener homes. In 2010, the "AVID Home Design Driver Report" was released at the International Builders' Show in Las Vegas. The study surveyed over 10,000 Canadian homeowners who, in the last nine years, either built a new home or purchased a newly constructed home.

The questions in this research study focused on a number of areas, including both renewable materials and energy-efficient features. Overall, the energy-efficient features were one of the highest-rated home design elements. When compared to renewable materials, it is evident that the renewable aspect of "green" has not yet penetrated consumer demand to the same degree.

Builders today should recognize the advantage of new, energy-efficient homes over the resale market. Houses that help pay for themselves through energy cost savings are a winner in the eyes of the consumer, while offering an unprecedented opportunity for the builder; some builders are outselling their competition now three to one by offering the more efficient home at a lower price. It is clear that a paradigm shift in home building is afoot; I recommend builders think about change or be left behind.

The New Normal: No More Hype-and-Jive



Braun/Allison Inc.
David Allison, President



Five trends that were catalyzed by the recession will continue to crystallize, becoming the new normal throughout all aspects of our industry; from land acquisition through to handing over the keys to a new

homeowner. These trends can be summarized as: an insistence on authenticity; a demand for two-way communication; an expectation of immediate responsiveness; wariness towards mainstream advertising; and embracing digital and social media

It's time to embrace the shift away from hype-and-jive. Prospects are not looking for Tuscan-style homes, unless they live in Tuscany. This holds true for interior design, architecture, and most of all, in the way we communicate.

People want (and deserve) facts and information before they will commit to buying the most expensive thing they will ever purchase: a new home. Traditional media blended with digital and social media must be used to get the facts out to prospects. The only antidote to fear and uncertainty is truth, and plenty of it.

If I see one more real estate development advertisement with an elegantly dressed, Photoshopped woman draped over a staircase, and a headline that says something like "Luxury Lives Here," I'm going to scream. Treat people with some respect. Inform them...tell them what they need to know. At Braun/Allison, we call this Marketing Journalism, but it's really nothing more than a commitment to sell the truth.

The Top-Down Condo Twist



Building Industry and Land Development Association - BILD
Stephen Dupuis, President, Chief Executive Officer



Top-down planning is having a major impact on development and building trends in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan mandates that 40 per cent of new development in any given year must be within the existing built boundary; development beyond the built boundary, but within the approved outer boundary, must be intensified.

Within the last decade, the share of the GTA housing market captured by high-rise condo developers has steadily risen from one quarter, which was considered normal, to a third, which was called the new normal, to more than 40 per cent (we called that The Year of the Condo), to the point today where slightly more than half of all new home sales annually are high-rise condos.

As this market shift has occurred, the City of Toronto has garnered an increasing share of the building activity within the GTA — at the expense of the suburban regions (the 905 area code) surrounding Toronto.

But there's a twist: the combined impact of the massive legislated Greenbelt, together with the Growth Plan's strict limits on urban boundary expansions, has severely restricted low-rise land supply in the 905 area. Between affordability constraints and the 40 per cent intensification rule, high-rise development is taking a firm hold in the 905 regions.

18 ► Understanding FlexHousing



Canadian Home Builders' Association – PEI
Lori Pearce, Chief Administrator



Most homes built in Canada over the past few decades have been designed to meet immediate needs. However, nothing stays the same — lives and circumstances change, people age and families grow and decrease in size. Why not give practical consideration on how to accommodate our changing needs when flexibility can be readily incorporated — at the start of the build.

FlexHousing™ is a concept of designing and building a house that allows the residents to adapt the space to meet their changing needs. Lifestyle changes have prompted Canadians to consider options in the design and use of their living space, such as improved access to entrances, wider hallways and doorways, and self-contained suites.

Examples of just how flexible and multi-functional a self-contained suite can be include: a rental unit (to help with a first time home buyer's mortgage or, perhaps, to help finance post-secondary education); a home office;

a living space for a teenager; a first time home for newly married adult children, saving for their own home; accommodations for aging parents; and a nanny suite.

FlexHousing™ is a viable option that makes it possible for people to remain in their homes while accommodating life changes and personal needs.

SOURCE: CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

Housing Market Slowing Down



The Conference Board of Canada
Julie Ades, Economist



The surge in resale market and housing starts activity, bolstered in 2009 by rock-bottom mortgage rates, has now abated. Higher mortgage rates and tax increases are already limiting demand for homes. As the demand for homes in the resale market weakens, pressure on home prices is expected to fall.

As a result, growth in new housing construction is forecast to weaken in the second half of 2010, and continue doing so throughout the first half of next year. After averaging only 149,000 units in 2009, housing starts are expected to reach 191,250 units in 2010

and 175,500 units in 2011.

Notwithstanding high levels of indebtedness and rising mortgage rates, the recovering labour market should help sustain moderate demand for housing over the near term. Housing starts are expected to start recovering in the second half of 2011 and demographic demand should allow residential construction to reach more than 200,000 units in the latter years of the forecast period.

The fall in renovation spending and the decline in new real residential investment should lead to a contraction in total real residential investment in the second half of the year. On an annual basis, the surge in activity over the past six to nine months is forecast to lead to an 11 per cent gain in real residential investment this year. A decline of 2 per cent is forecast for 2011.

Insulating Concrete Forms: Economical and Eco-Friendly



Habitat Design + Consulting Ltd.
Chris Mattock, Green Consultant
Project Manager, Harmony House, Burnaby, BC



Upcoming BC Building codes are looking to the housing industry to be a leader in tackling climate change by producing homes to a Net Zero ready standard. Insulating Concrete Forms (ICF) will play a big role in helping builders meet those goals as economically as possible, while minimizing construction environmental impacts and maintaining high indoor air quality.

In the Harmony House project, the only Equilibrium home to be constructed on the west coast, and the first zero carbon building in BC, we will also incorporate a wide range of other green features such as low toxicity interior finishes, materials with recycled content, water conservation and rain water harvesting.

2011: A Good Year for Builders and First-time Buyers



Genworth Financial, Inc.
Peter Vukanovich, President & COO



We are not economists at Genworth, and we don't make projections on a numbers basis. Having said that, as specialists in mortgage finance, we do closely track housing starts and inventory levels in each market across the country; these are the key factors in determining market direction.

The consensus for 2011 seems to be that starts will be marginally lower; this seems logical given the pull

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forward of demand into the first half of 2010 due to the threat of rising interest rates and government policy changes. I do believe a clear strength of the Canadian market is based on builders' ability to forecast local supply/demand and strict discipline to building homes that meet home buyers' needs. As a result, 2011 will be a good year for builders and first-time home buyers across the country.

Understanding the Under-40



Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association
Peter Simpson, President and Chief Executive Officer



In order to attract and retain talented individuals, the residential construction industry must acknowledge and respond to the needs of the younger generations (Gen-X and Gen-Y). This year, the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association formed a U-40 Committee, comprised of industry men and women — some experienced, some rookies — under the age of 40.

We wanted to learn how our association can remain relevant to the younger members and increase their level of participation in association activities. Topics

of discussion at U-40 meetings include social media, mentoring, service on committees and councils (including the Board), specially tailored education and training programs, and networking opportunities.

The response has been phenomenal. More than 80 U-40 members attended a recent networking evening. In attendance were young developers, builders, renovators, designers, suppliers and skilled tradespeople.

U-40 members are eager to invest considerable time and energy in the association, as long as its goals continue to be in tune with the changing times. Judging by the enthusiastic response from these leaders of tomorrow, the residential construction industry has a very bright future indeed.

WRHBA: Partnering with Conestoga College & Home Hardware



Waterloo Region Home Builders' Association
Home Hardware Building Centre
Conestoga College School of Trades and Apprenticeship
Marie Schroeder, Executive Officer, WRHBA



Waterloo Region Home Builders' Association (WRHBA) has been working with Conestoga College School of Trades and Apprenticeships on three new

initiatives to educate students and homeowners about the building process, renovations, professionalism and the residential construction industry:

1. WRHBA is currently building its first Education House. The project is a "living classroom" for Conestoga College School of Trades and Apprenticeships students. Scheduled tours throughout the building process provide students exposure to the fundamentals for best building practices and innovative products, providing an understanding of how their education will translate to the work site. The home will be sold and portion of the proceeds will help establish an awards program for the students.

2. WRHBA and Conestoga College introduced a Student Ambassador Program for second year carpentry students. Established to educate students on what it means to be part of a professional Association, the program gives students networking opportunities with industry professionals, and the latest news in the residential construction industry. Students are required to attend a WRHBA meeting during the school year and write a report which will go towards their final credit.

3. WRHBA, in partnership with Home Hardware Building Centre and Conestoga College School of Trades and Apprenticeship, invited the public to attend the Go with a Pro Renovation Seminar on Saturday, October 30, 2010 for a free renovation seminar to help homeowners renovate with confidence.

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IT'S FREE! GET LISTED

The January/February issue of Home BUILDER is dedicated to the Annual Buyer's guide, an up-to-date listing of Canada's top building products suppliers to the residential construction industry. It will be read by more than 65,000 building professional who rely on home BUILDER to deliver the news and information they need (and want) to succeed.

This hand-on guide delivers results:

- 🏠 Exposure
- 🏠 Credibility
- 🏠 Coast-to coast readership from members in our industry
- 🏠 Long-term payoff for your 2011 marketing

Furthermore, the Home BUILDER Magazine Annual BUYER'S GUIDE has proven longevity: Readers keep it as a reference all year long. As an added bonus, it's also available online in a digital flipbook format for those on the move. Ensure your inclusion by promptly returning the forms we mailed you. New companies can also be included by contacting us immediately.



DON'T MISS IT!

Information updates for the free listings are due:
December 13, 2010

For display ads and products announcements:
January 3, 2011



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21 ► Destination: 2012



EnerQuality Corporation
Corey McBurney, President



Ontario builders take note: January 2012 is a mere 14 months away. On this milestone date, ENERGY STAR levels of energy efficiency will be in the Ontario building code. For this reason, the theme dominating green building over the next year or so is transition.

Energy efficiency has increasingly become a mainstream feature of new housing in Ontario. In 2009, 21 per cent of Ontario's new housing starts were ENERGY STAR labelled; one per cent was labelled under the premier programs of GreenHouse and R-2000. That said, transitioning 100 per cent of Ontario's new housing starts to EnerGuide 80 equivalent performance levels, starting January 1, 2012, will be no small undertaking.

Many builders are not prepared for the task at hand. At a minimum, you will have to come to terms with the new requirements and costs to be code-compliant. If you're an ENERGY STAR (or better) builder and want to maintain your leadership position, you will be moving from ENERGY STAR version 4 to version 5 — earmarked at an EnerGuide 83 (25 per cent better than code).

So, while the visionaries are driving towards net zero, and the broader sustainability conversation includes issues of land use, water and waste, most builders are just starting to grapple with the more immediate reality: 2012.

Staying Ahead of the Industry Curve



Mibroc Group of Companies
Darryl Caunt, President of CHBA Central Interior
CEO, Mibroc Group of Companies



Gone are the days when a junior tradesperson works under a builder for a few years and automatically becomes qualified to build an award winning home. I know a number of excellent builders who have 30 years of experience building the same style of homes and they are now being asked to build cutting-edge homes using the latest green products, released at a home show or editorialized in a magazine. The comfort zone of all builders continues to be pushed. As a result, successful building leaders have to adapt their businesses to embrace this evolving technology and consumer demand. It's not easy; building a successful business is very different from simply building a home.

To these builders I suggest taking relevant and

appropriate courses to stay ahead of the industry curve. In the end, this knowledge is tangible and can be used to promote your businesses, provide greater value for your clients, and position your companies strategically for growth. I can speak firsthand as to how my simple decision to take courses and engage building consultants has enabled me to maximize my company's growth while minimizing my potential for mistakes along the way.

Manufacturing a Sustainable Journey



GAF Materials Corporation
Martin Grohman, Director of Sustainability



In manufacturing, sustainability is a journey, not a destination. It's really about core business concepts like efficiency and the wise use of resources. As North America's largest roofing manufacturer, GAF is continuously working to become more sustainable by evaluating the use of energy, resources, and raw materials.

One of the advantages of having a large number of plants and national reach is that it provides more opportunity for sharing ideas across locations, areas, and functions. Our team has focused on collaborative efforts between plant sites — checking in with each location to discuss ideas and best practices, and finding ways to share those ideas between sites using the company's internal Sustainability Action Center (a corporate intranet site devoted to all things green).

The success of these efforts is evidenced in GAF's recent announcement that all of its roofing plants now recycle manufacturing shingle waste, diverting thousands of tons of materials from landfills, annually. Efficiency of logistics and supply chain is also an opportunity. Sustainability improves operational flexibility, operational effect, saves logistic burden and saves costs, and delivers a wider environmental benefit.

At its core, sustainability is really about efficiency, the wise use of resources, and minimizing energy use.

Trends in Thermal Imaging



Meltech Thermal Imaging Inc.
Gordon Melvin, CET, GSC



As a project manager, designer, home builder, renovator, and inspector in the residential and commercial/ industrial construction industry, I have been gratified to see the growing trend towards energy efficient building practices. Buyers are increasing the professional level

of pre-purchase inspections of the buildings before they purchase, and contractors and builders are required to "prove" that their building and/or renovation work is meeting local energy efficiency guidelines.

One trend is to use infra-red cameras to perform "thermal imaging." Thermal imaging can be used to ensure that there is minimal air leakage within the building envelope, no missing insulation within the cavities of the exterior walls or attic spaces, or that heat supply lines are properly sealed with no obstructions.

Thermal imaging can also detect hidden problem areas before they become expensive repairs. Examples of using thermal imaging in preventative maintenance include: Electrical equipment and panels for overloaded breakers, switches or fuses, loose or corroded connections; HVAC operating systems such as the mechanical and heating equipment and heating systems, ventilation ductwork or in-floor heating lines; building envelope items such as roofs, walls, floors and foundations for water or air leaks; rodents or ant infestations; missing, settled or damaged insulation; and mould issues.

The Next Step: Zero Energy Homes



Love Energy Consultants Inc.
Peter Love, President

Love Energy Consultants Inc.

Canadian home builders have been world leaders in building energy-efficient homes, led by the many R-2000 builders from across the country who have been certifying their homes since the 1980s and continuing with the EnergyStar builders of today. It is now time to take the next step, albeit a big one, to Zero Energy Homes.

Up until just a few years ago, such off-grid homes were rare, owner-built and received relatively little publicity. But, recently, leading production builders have built about a dozen such homes across the country, from the Atlantic Provinces, to Ottawa, British Columbia, and even in Edmonton.

In the European Union, all new buildings constructed will have to be "nearly zero-energy" by 2020; in the UK, they are required to be carbon-neutral by 2016. In the US, a widely-supported coalition of building architects/ experts has issued the 2030 Challenge of having all new buildings carbon-neutral.

It's time for Canadian builders to demonstrate their international leadership again. Make your next home a Zero Energy Home. Learn from this and then build a few more. And then work toward making this your own standard. Your home buyers will love you every time they open their energy bills in the future.

Next Issue: **ANNUAL BUYER'S GUIDE**

Communal Living: The Multi-Generational Reality



Masco Canada
Anita Griffin, Marketing Brand Manager



As a leader in the Canadian plumbing industry, Masco Canada continually researches how and why Canadians live the way they do. The recent shift towards several generations of families living under one roof — which will continue in the years to come — has altered what Canadians are looking for in their homes, and has greatly impacted product and home design.

The multi-generational home is the new reality for many Canadians. Grandparents, parents, grandchildren and even aunts and uncles are living under one roof. Consequently, the home is no longer about individual space, but communal living.

People are looking for, and creating, open-plan, communal spaces in their homes, where the family can gather and spend time together, while bedrooms and other private spaces are shrinking in size.

Concerns over economic uncertainty have resulted in people staying home to entertain instead of venturing out. As a result, large kitchens that open into the family's living and gathering room are in demand. Advances in the design and functionality of small appliances and fixtures make at-home entertaining and lounging more comfortable and include things like faucets with touch technology, double ovens for efficient meal preparation and built-in bars.

Building Talent: Connecting with Generation Z



Summit Search Group BC
Dan Brown, Consultant



Managing staffing levels presents a significant human resource challenge in most industries and sectors. For the home building industry, the challenge is compounded by continual shifts in the cost of building materials and the common practice of "employee theft" amongst competitors. With a new generation of talent emerging into the workforce, how can companies attract Generation Z into the home building industry?

Generation Z is a highly connected generation, accustomed to fast-paced communication through instant messaging, text messaging, and social media channels. With this in mind, companies need to move faster in order to attract potential young candidates. Even if a hire decision has not been made, a simple

message to update candidates on the status of the process can make a large impact.

On the flipside, the extreme connectivity of Generation Z should warrant extra due-diligence on the part of hiring managers. If a young candidate has a poor interview experience (i.e. an interviewer shows up late or lacks enthusiasm), the candidate can use their social media skills to broadcast their negative experience to large social networks. Generation Z presents new facets to recruitment — something all companies need to keep in mind when trying to attract young talent.

Leading the Charge to Net-Zero



Net-Zero Energy Home Coalition
Sonja Winkelmann, Executive Director



As interest in Net-Zero Energy Homes continues to grow, the efforts of the Coalition continue to respond to the needs of the residential construction industry. Watch for national projects focused on the following topics: definition and metrics; monitoring and verification; integrated design process; building envelope systems; energy simulation and design tools; renewable energy systems; training and education; market information and education; and financial framework.

The Coalition and its supporters are helping advance new economic opportunities to home builders, building product suppliers, utilities, financial institutions, real estate and mortgage companies, engineers, the architecture community and renewable energy sectors. We are looking for industry champions who will help leverage the Coalition's successes by supporting our continued outreach activities and advocacy for policies, programs and support measures that will expand demonstration projects, accelerate NZEH deployment across Canada and ultimately provide smarter and cost effective energy solutions for homeowners.

We invite you to join our growing list of industry leaders, innovators and trailblazers sharing in a vision and growing movement that has become a catalyst for transformation in Canada's residential construction marketplace.

Withstanding Low VOC Scrutiny



Sansin Corporation
Sjoerd Bos, Vice President



Low VOC stains, and other architectural coatings, will have an increasingly important role to play, especially as green home building programs continue to

grow, and as consumers increase demand, and are willing to pay for, a greener, healthier home environment. However, as consumers demand low-VOC and low-toxicity coatings, they will be increasingly adamant that they still perform as well or better than their more toxic counterparts.

We also see heat-treated wood growing in demand for outdoor siding, decks and other features. Heat treatment of wood reduces hygroscopicity, improves dimensional stability, and increases resistance to microbial attack and biodegradation without the use of toxic chemicals. With proper finishing and coating to protect from UV degradation and natural weathering, stunning wood exteriors can be achieved at a much lower cost.

To ensure a product can withstand extensive scrutiny, it's essential that a company invest in research and development and extensive testing. When it comes to comparing green products, we suggest to our dealers that they advise consumers to look beyond the label, and to compare apples to apples. In the case of wood stains, that means comparing alkyds to alkyds, hybrids to hybrids, and acrylic to acrylic.

Composting Toilets Systems: Moving to the Mainstream



Sancor Industries
Scott Smith, VP Marketing



Installing a composting toilet system is becoming more popular for applications other than just cottages and cabins — the traditional places where we tend to think of using compost toilets. But use of composting toilets in home applications, such as workshops, basements, pool cabanas, as well as commercial applications including golf courses, warehouses and construction sites, is growing.

A composting toilet system offers many benefits over other options, such as traditional plumbing or septic tank systems. They are environment-friendly, use very little water (as low as 0.2L per flush) or no water at all, and they are also easily installed without plumbing or septic, making them extremely economical (a new septic tank system can cost from \$5,000 to \$25,000; a complete composting toilet system is in the \$2,000 to \$6,000 range).

There is also rise in the use of composting toilets in non-traditional applications, like concrete slabs, largely due to innovations in the installation technology. Newer systems are also much more aesthetically-pleasing with modern ceramic bowl designs and push-button flushing. Great looks, environmental benefits and money savings are moving composting toilets toward the mainstream.

Unlocking Z Wave Technology



Schlage - Ingersoll Rand Residential Solutions
Sam Russo, Marketing & Business Development Manager

Home automation technology is a growing trend among household consumers, and it's quickly becoming an important value-added feature and differentiator for home builders across Canada. To set their homes apart from the rest, progressive builders might consider looking toward Z Wave technology.

A radio frequency communication platform, Z Wave technology allows enabled devices to be securely accessed and monitored wirelessly, giving home buyers the freedom to lock and unlock the front door, reset the temperature on their thermostat, or adjust their lighting room by room — all from the convenience of an easy-to-use web or mobile interface. Take it one step further by installing web-based security cameras that allow the homeowner to monitor activities inside the home.

There are lots of ways to make your homes stand out from the competition. One way is giving home buyers the ability to manage the safety, comfort and efficiency of their homes, all from the convenience of their couch, car, or from a vacation home thousands of kilometres away.

The 100-Year Septic System



SoilAir Systems Canada
Gary Sharp, P. Eng., President

It's seldom discussed, but more than 25 per cent of Canadian homes rely on septic systems to process their wastewater. So why do we build houses to last 100 years and septic systems that need to be replaced every 20 years or so? Traditionally, this has been considered normal behaviour in the septic industry. Contractors install septic systems using septic tanks that corrode with wastewater and drain fields that biologically clog over time. When they fail, contractors replace them with — you guessed it — septic tanks that corrode with wastewater and drain fields that biologically clog over time.

The key elements required to make a septic system last 100 years include: a tank that does not react with wastewater; a drain field that relies on aerobic bacteria to process the wastewater; providing a drain field ventilation to support the aerobic bacteria; monitoring the performance of the system; and providing professional, annual maintenance for the system and

all components.

Einstein said doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result was insanity. A better understanding of how septic systems work will allow us to make septic systems last as long as the houses they are connected to.

It's Time to Look Outside the Building Envelope



Stantec Consulting Ltd.
Kevin Fergin, P. Eng., President of Brantford Home Builders' Association; Principal, Stantec Consulting Ltd.

Our industry has made tremendous strides over the last 10 years to advance the energy efficiency of homes and to educate the consumer on building green. We are getting to the point where energy efficiency is being pushed to "net zero," and affordability is eroding. We need to shift our focus outside the building envelope and look at energy efficiency at the community level, whether through a Plan of Condominium or a Plan of Subdivision.

Local and regional municipalities need to move beyond the philosophical approach to green, and take concrete steps to embracing the "built form" of energy efficiency. The Ministry of Environment (MOE) must also recognize that technologies and engineering approaches have evolved and that green solutions to grey water recovery/reuse, advanced wastewater treatment/reuse and heat energy recovery methods exist in the built form in Europe and areas of the US.

We need the MOE to take steps to embrace new approaches while maintaining the health and welfare interests of the public. If all levels of government get on board and work with our industry, we can create the energy efficient communities of the future, today!

Government Stimulus Grants



Vinyl Window Designs Ltd.
Phil Lewin, V.P. Marketing

Compared to our southern neighbours, Canadians are more amenable to government involvement. As a result, awareness and use of stimulus grants for the purchase of energy efficient products resulted in our federal government running out of money to sustain the EcoEnergy grants far earlier than they anticipated.

The problem with this, however, is that the government has now created a financial expectation that, in the absence of grants, encourages homeowners to

wait for a new grant program before making purchases. If you want to renovate your home with energy efficient products, do you want to sign a check for payment to the contractor — only to discover the next day that you could have saved thousands of dollars from a new government program? Not likely, unless your furnace died or your windows were falling out of their openings. Otherwise, one is motivated to wait, and that is not good for the natural flow of our industry.

While we all love the excitement generated by government industry stimulus grants, we are now paying the price for that involvement. It's time for government at all levels to step up and end the uncertainty of what they are going to do or not do over the next 18 months.

Bungalows for Baby Boomers



Marcus Design
Marcus Cormier, PTEch

Bungalows have been around for a long time, although their popularity and usage has varied throughout past decades. As a house designer, I've noticed a gradual increase in bungalow construction during recent years, a trend I attribute to the first onset of the Baby Boomer generation settling into comfortable retirement.

Some retired Boomers will seek Sun Belt regions. Others will mature in place. However, many will opt to build that final home in order to downsize, prepare for future needs and accommodate an independent lifestyle.

Whether financially set or living on a fixed income, this generation will look for style without unnecessary excess. They will opt for maintenance-free materials and simple and efficient landscaping elements to minimize outdoor work.

To safeguard their independence, homes will require extra planning to accommodate possible barrier-free living, such as wider doors, extra wall reinforcing for future grab bar installation, and the elimination of stairs; an increase of slab-on-grade construction is likely to coincide. Baby Boomers will likely choose this alternative in regards to both barrier-free living and downsizing purposes.

With proper planning and a few simple considerations, builders and designers should be able to provide comfortable retreats for the Baby Boomer generation.

Talking Points: A Call to Industry Leaders will be back in November 2011. Stay tuned for details in an upcoming edition. Let your voice be heard.